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'Big, big, big mess:' Dad

Bringing it home.

Parents, students feeling pressure as teachers' job action mounts



ANGELA MULLINS

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Chaos.

Some say that's the easiest way to describe what's unfolding at schools — and trickling into homes — across the Thames Valley district.

Secondary school teachers have rejected a tentative contract and started work-to-rule action. Assemblies have been cancelled in at least some high schools. Thames Valley Regional Athletics events — including those at Catholic schools — are on hold from Monday to Dec. 21 because teachers aren't manning extracurriculars, district officials announced Thursday.

Contract talks between the board and elementary teachers are at a standstill, union officials have said. Teachers at that level have been in work-to-rule mode since school started, and rotating walkouts will start Monday across the province. Field trips have also been cancelled.

Students have started their own protests, with some walking out of classrooms

Why they voted "no"

Officials with the union representing secondary school teachers haven't made the vote margin or details about their tentative contract public.

- But, for now, both are moot points, said Colleen Canon, president of the Thames Valley local.

- The rejection of the proposal was, more than anything, a statement about the teachers' frustration with the government stepping into contract talks, Canon said.

- "We hope the parents and students who might be upset ... can understand that our fight is not with them, it's with the government," she said.

this week and others planning to follow suit Monday.

The legislature remains prorogued, nixing any chance the government will repeal Bill 115 — contract legislation many are blaming for the disruption.

And, caught in the eye of the tornado, are people like David Winter and his daughters.

A London business owner,

you might say Winter has taken on a second job this school year — keeping up with the latest on the teacher dispute.

"It's just a big, big, big mess," said Winter, whose daughters are in Grades 8 and 10 at separate schools. "It's very scary. You miss something and your kid comes home in tears ... and you're left trying to straighten it out."

He found out Thursday that a much-anticipated field trip had been cancelled at his youngest daughter's school. Nicole, Winter's other daughter, came home in a bad mood later the same day, saying lunch-hour help she usually gets with her math homework is no longer available.

Despite assurance from teachers that they remain dedicated, tensions most definitely have spilled over to the classroom, Nicole said.

"The teachers are like, 'We can't help you with that,' or 'We can't help you with this,'" the 15-year-old Banting secondary school student said. "We have no choice over any of this, no say at all."

Something needs to be done, and it needs to be done fast, David Winter said. He suggests everyone start by taking a deep breath, settling down and focusing on what's important — kids.



Nicole Winter, 15, a Grade 10 student at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School, and her father, David Winter, 40, pictured Thursday at their London home, are two of the many people feeling the pains of intensifying labour action from unions representing teachers. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

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DELTA



Blown Away by Carrie Underwood

Lauren Griffin, left, and Miranda Semak, both 15 and from Stratford, show off their Carrie Underwood tickets Thursday as they wait in the lobby of London's Budweiser Gardens for the sold-out concert. Underwood's Blown Away tour, including opening act Hunter Hayes, is in Ottawa on Saturday and Toronto on Sunday. Underwood, 29, released her fourth album, Blown Away, in May. It's gone platinum in the U.S. and gold in Canada. The Oklahoma native was recently cast as Maria von Trapp for a live TV version of The Sound of Music, expected to air on NBC next year. ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

London company reduces workforce

Layoffs. More than 40 General Dynamics workers to be let go later this month



ANGELA MULLINS

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General Dynamics Land Systems is laying off 46 people.

Employees were given the news Wednesday.

Their last day on the job will be Dec. 21, Ken Yamashita, spokesman for the company said.

The cuts affect salary and contract positions, representing a two per cent reduction in the operation's work force, Yamashita said.

The decision wasn't the result of losing a contract or any other specific event, he said.

"You have to make adjustments from time to time, and that's exactly what

Workers

2,300

Approximate number of people currently working at General Dynamics Land Systems in London.

we've done here.

"We needed to reduce the size of the organization to meet the projected business demands."

The company has been

on an "extraordinary run" with the work force growing by about 40 per cent in the last decade. Maintaining that pace would have been difficult, he said.

Overall, General Dynamics is healthy and is continuing to pursue new contracts, Yamashita said. No additional job cuts are planned.

The company makes light-armoured vehicles for the Canadian and U.S. militaries along with other international customers.

Health. 2 influenza-related deaths reported in London

The Middlesex-London Health Unit has reported two influenza-related deaths.

In its latest influenza surveillance report, the health unit said in the week from Tuesday, Nov. 27 to Monday, two people died among the laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases.

A spokeswoman for the health unit said no more details about the deceased

would be released.

There were 26 new confirmed influenza A cases over the week, according to a news release, including 17 that required hospitalization. Three of the hospitalized cases are associated with a flu outbreak in an acute-care hospital.

As of Monday, there have been 41 lab-confirmed influenza A cases and no in-

fluenza B cases this flu season in Middlesex-London.

Overall in the province, Public Health Ontario reported that influenza activity continued to increase for the week of Nov. 18 to 24, which is the most recent information available.

Here in London, the health unit is reminding people they can still get their flu vaccine. The clinic

at 50 King St. is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. On the first and third Wednesdays of each month, it is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information, visit healthunit.com. METRO



OHL action

Knights extend streak to 16 games

Tyler Ferry scored the final of four unanswered goals as the league-leading London Knights rallied to beat the Brampton Battalion 4-3 in Ontario Hockey League action Thursday.

Matt Rupert, Josh Anderson and Seth Griffith also scored for the Knights (24-5-2), who stretched their winning streak to 16 games.

"A big win for us. We battled back and went into the third period with a good mentality," said Griffith. "Ever since I got to London, it's been a winning organization. Lots of depth on this team. They teach you how to win right off the bat."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Donations

\$100 Challenge on Saturday

The third annual \$100 Challenge will take place Saturday.

This public event encourages people to come together each with \$100. Everyone then goes into the community and gives this money out to people or charities to make their lives better.

The \$100 can be distributed either in one payment, or among several worthy causes or people of your choosing. Participants are asked to meet at Joe Kool's by 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

The \$100 Challenge was founded by Londoner Andrew Schiestel. Since 2010, people have participated in the \$100 Challenge in at least six countries and a formal event has been held as far away as New Zealand.

METRO

Healthy, active living

Dance-walk down Richmond

Londoners are being encouraged to join a dance-walk down Richmond Row to Victoria Park on Saturday.

Londoners of all ages — pets included — are asked to meet at 2 p.m. outside Barney's patio, where the parade to promote healthy, active living and lifting spirits will begin.

The event will run until 4 p.m. People are encouraged to come and go as they please, and dance-walk for as little or as long as they want. It's a free event, with an optional-themed attire of "bells and bows."

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Kidney research

Doctor awarded research medal

William Clark, of the London Health Science Centre, was presented Wednesday with the 2012 Kidney Foundation of Canada Medal for Research Excellence. This year he also won a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his charity work with the Kidney Foundation. **METRO**

Powerful women

LHSC president honoured

Bonnie Adamson, president and CEO of the London Health Sciences Centre, received a Top 10 Most Powerful Women award in the public-sector leaders category, Wednesday. Co-presented by Scotiabank and KPMG, the awards celebrate the achievements of women across the country in the



Bonnie Adamson LHSC.ON.CA

private, public and not-for-profit sectors. **METRO**

Mayan doomsday

Not the end of the world as we know it

Researchers from Western University say we can't believe the hype about the Mayan doomsday prediction and will share their views on the topic at a public event next week.

Science Here and Now, a free public lecture series, will cover astronomical catastrophes, separate truth from

fiction and debunk many of the prophetic claims made hundreds of years ago.

Professors Linda Howie and Pauline Barmby will discuss the global fascination with Dec. 21, 2012, when the ancient Mayan calendar finishes its current cycle, triggering what believers trust will mark the end of the world.

The talk takes place Tuesday at the London Public Library, Central Branch, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. **METRO**

Grassroots

Bud Gardens donates \$24K

Global Spectrum has raised \$24,350 for charity in conjunction with Budweiser Gardens' 10th anniversary celebration. Fundraising efforts included a VIP gala, silent auction and London Knights 50-50 draw. Arts for All Kids and George Bray Sports Association will benefit. **METRO**

Tories unsure about private liquor revenue

Boost or bust? Tory leader insists province would be 'careful and thoughtful'

A proposal from Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak to privatize liquor sales in Ontario may not generate more revenue for taxpayers, the party's finance critic admitted Thursday.

"You ask about how we know we'd make more money; I can tell you frankly we don't but we don't know that we'd make any less money," Peter Shurman told reporters.

"We believe that it's essential to sit down with people who are specialists and come to a conclusion on, as Tim says, what the appropriate model should be."

Earlier this week, Hudak announced he would not cut taxes on alcohol but he would

Other proposals

Hudak also wants to reduce the size of the cabinet from 24 to just 16 members and open any government services and labour contract worth more than \$10,000 to competitive bidding from the private sector.

consider selling part or all of the LCBO, which brought in \$1.65 billion to the province last year, excluding taxes.

The Tory leader said Alberta never saw any drop in revenue when it privatized liquor sales and pointed to a 2007 study that showed privatization could increase revenue for taxpayers.

The Liberals pointed out that Hudak used to oppose privatization, as did former Conservative premiers Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, who said they considered the idea a bad deal for taxpayers. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**



Remembering Ecole Polytechnique

LEFT: Western engineering students Emily Keyes, 21, left, and Julianna Arcese, 22, participate in a ceremony Thursday to remember the 14 women fatally shot at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on Dec. 6, 1989, as well as Lynda Shaw, a third-year Western mechanical-engineering student murdered near Highway 401 in 1990. Keyes and Arcese are leaders in Western's Women in Engineering group, which organized Thursday's memorial service. RIGHT: Fanshawe College student Lindsay Foster, 31, prepares to place a rose and candle to honour one of the women killed in the Polytechnique massacre. A vigil for the women was a focal point of the college's memorial marking Thursday's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. **ANGELA MULLINS/METRO**



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United States mulls over plan to release mutant mosquitoes

Florida Keys. Modified insects would kill off their brethren and help prevent outbreaks of dengue fever

Mosquito control officials in the Florida Keys are waiting for the federal government to sign off on an experiment that would release hundreds of thousands of genetically modified mosquitoes to reduce the risk of dengue fever in the tourist town of Key West.

If approved by the Food and Drug Administration, it would be the first such experiment in the U.S. Some Key West residents worry, though, that not enough research has been done to determine the risks that releasing genetically modified mosquitoes might pose to the Keys' fragile ecosystem.



A squashed *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in Key Largo, Fla.

WILFREDO LEE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Officials are targeting the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes because they can spread dengue fever, a disease health officials thought had been eradicated in the U.S. until 93 cases originated in the Keys in 2009 and 2010.

The trial planned by mos-

quito-control officials and the British company Oxitec would release non-biting male mosquitoes that have been genetically modified to pass along a birth defect that kills their progeny before reaching maturity. The idea is that they will mate with wild females and their children will die before reproducing. After a few generations, Key West's *Aedes aegypti* population would die off, reducing the dengue fever risk without using pesticides and at a relatively low cost, the proponents say. There is no vaccine for dengue fever.

The Florida Keys Mosquito Control District website says the modified genes will disappear from the environment after the mosquitoes carrying it die, resulting in no permanent change to the wild mosquito population. It also says the mosquito species isn't native to the Keys, nor is it an integral food source for other animals. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**



In sickness and in health

Britain's Prince William stands next to his wife, Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, as she leaves the King Edward VII hospital in central London on Thursday. Kate had been admitted to hospital suffering from severe morning sickness. **ANDREW MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Denied asylum

John McAfee hospitalized

Software company founder John McAfee was hospitalized Thursday after being denied asylum in Guatemala, and his lawyers said they were making a last-ditch effort to keep him from being flown back to Belize for questioning about the killing of a fellow American expatriate.

A doctor examining him for chest pain said McAfee appeared to be suffering from high stress.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Firearm advisory

Harper rejects lax gun-law plans

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is unhappy with recommendations from a firearms advisory committee that would relax laws.

The committee wants some prohibited weapons, including hand guns and assault rifles, reclassified to make them more easily available and is pushing to make licences good for at least 10 years, rather than five. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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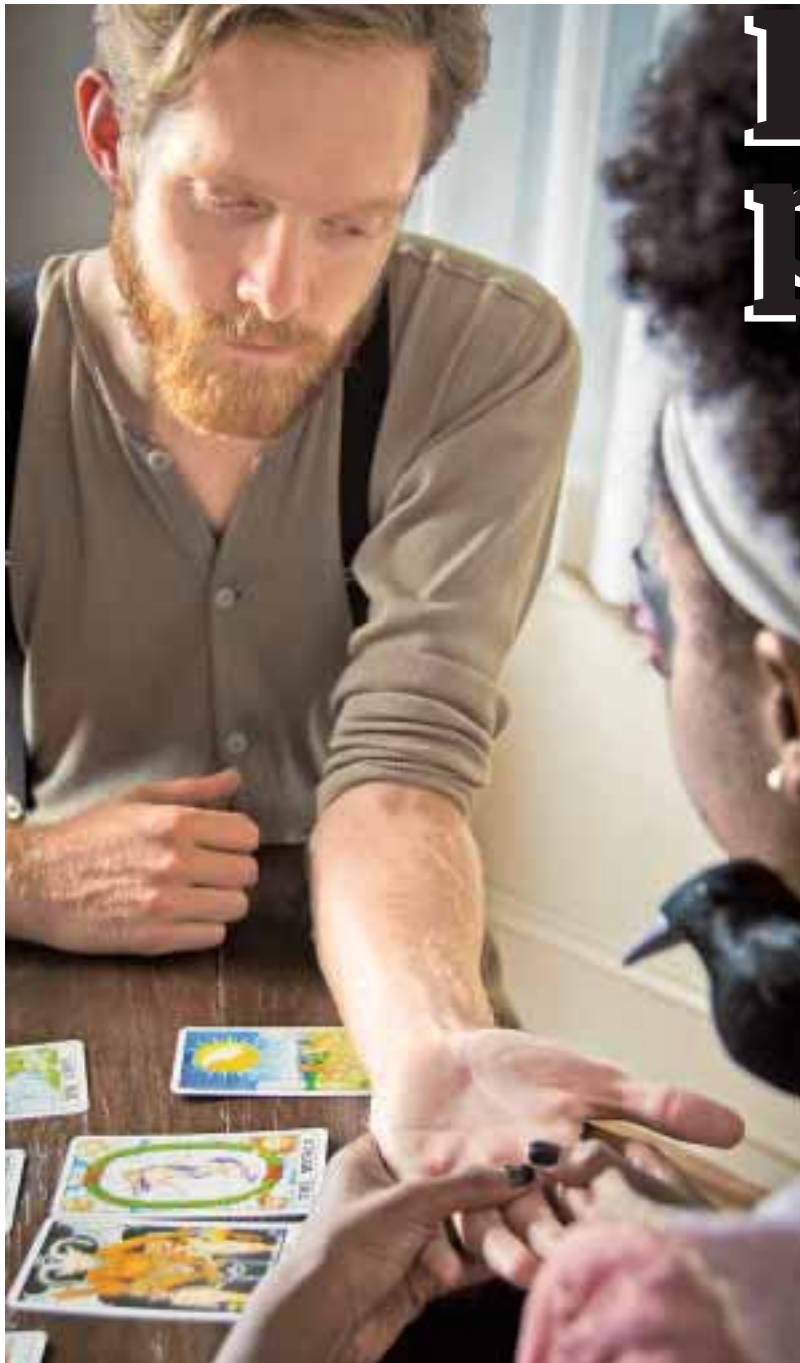
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Bewitching promises



This photo illustrates a tarot reading. People's belief systems make them vulnerable to the kinds of scams run by false mediums, says James Alcock, a York University professor. Those beliefs range from believing in the existence of the occult to thinking that financial advisers' pyramid schemes will make you rich. ISTOCK

Psychic claims. Visit to 'Angel of Love' leaves Toronto man broke and heavy-hearted

"Rick" first went to see Angel because he wanted to find his ex-girlfriend.

He was responding to an ad by a psychic who calls himself the "Angel of Love."

He returned to Angel, repeatedly, because he wanted his band's music to be heard around the world.

Today, the ex-girlfriend hasn't returned, the band is still unknown and Rick is \$11,000 poorer. He doesn't want his real name used because he's deeply embarrassed. He's an intelligent man who holds a good job with the provincial government.

Police say his case is not unique. Last week, Toronto police laid fraud charges against a man claiming to be a witch

Guilt and shame

"My money's gone though ... They're laughing. Probably got a new car"

Rick, who says he was scammed but is too embarrassed to go the police.

doctor. On Wednesday, police again cautioned the public about three women claiming to be psychics who preyed on two Chinese victims.

There is a fine line between psychics who break the law and those who don't.

According to Toronto police spokesman Const. Tony Vella, offering a psychic reading for money is legal. It becomes fraud if the psychic knowingly frightens the client into giving him money. There is a law against pretending to practice witchcraft, but it's legal to believe you are offering a real psychic reading.

Rick says Angel told him an evil spirit was causing his problems. For a fee, he claimed to be

able to remove the spirit.

Rick met Angel and his female assistant at their office.

"To start off, it's going to be \$900. So I went and I took \$900 from ... my Visa."

He was told to drink a cup of liquid.

"I started barfing right in a cup. I said it's too much. He said it's just the start."

Rick returned to Angel many times since his first visit last spring. He spent another \$3,000, before being told to phone their leader, "Juan," in Miami. That man asked Rick for another \$11,000. Juan convinced him the "evil spirit in the netherworld" would obey their commands, for a price.

"I took out \$8,000 more. It was the most I could get," he said. "He said okay, enough, we'll work on it for you."

Angel didn't show him the spirit like promised, Rick says.

Toronto's Angel of Love has not been convicted of any crime related to his soothsaying business. JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Why we fall for scams

You've been very hurt by someone in your past

We're all susceptible to scams when they play on the belief system we've adopted since childhood, according to a psychology professor at York University in Toronto.

"Everybody's vulnerable," said James Alcock, who teaches a class on belief systems. "You could take a

person who doesn't believe in curses, won't believe in psychics, is very careful about responding to spam emails and yet they could be suckered by some financial adviser."

Belief in psychics, witches, curses and spells is deeply rooted in many cultures and people usually pick up those beliefs as children.

While some psychics truly believe in what they're doing, others scam, picking up on their mark's vulnerabilities, said Alcock. "There's a need the person has, or the psychic creates the need, and then they fill the need," he said.

Many psychics use tricks of the trade to read people and gain their confidence, said Alcock. He gives a "cold reading" to a student in his class every year, even though he's not psychic.

"When you're talking to a psychic, you're giving feedback, even if you're trying not to," he said.

The combination of vague statements and careful observation works. Every so often, a student will come up to him privately after class to ask if he really is psychic, because he appeared to know all about some deeply personal thing that happened to them.

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Evidence still sought

Cash for occult proof

A former magician and escape artist is offering \$1 million to anyone who can show evidence of any paranormal, supernatural, or occult power or event in a controlled test.

James Randi offered \$1,000 to the first person who could offer proof of the paranormal in 1964 and since then, no one has been able to claim the prize. With the aid of donors and his educational foundation, the prize grew to \$1 million.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO



In Salem, Mass., metaphysical items such as tarot cards and crystals are counted towards a fortune teller licence. ISTOCK

The ex files: Metro reporter asks 'Angel' to find her guy



JESSICA SMITH
Metro in Toronto

I went to the Angel of Love's office not hoping to find my lost ex-boyfriend, as I told him, but to verify claims the psychic was telling people they were cursed and the way to remove it was to give him money.

I, too, was told that I had been cursed and that it would cost me a lot of money to have my ex-boyfriend back.

We met in the back room of a dingy apartment over a convenience store on Eglinton Avenue West in Toronto. There was no neon sign flashing "psychic," no crystal ball.

Only a pack of tarot cards on the messy desk gave it away as something a little different.

I said I couldn't get in touch with my ex and I was worried about his safety.

Angel spoke in a deep, gravely foreign language and his assistant translated. After a bit of negotiation, he gave me a "reading" for \$40.

"Your luck is not good," said the assistant as Angel

read my tarot cards. "On your luck, depends everything. Love and work. Everything. Money, money comes and money goes."

They told me a lot of people are envious of me. I tried to look pleased, to pass off as vain.

"There is a woman, she is the one that has a lot of envy over you," said the assistant. "She is envious of your relationship."

They asked if I've been to a psychic before. I said no, truthfully.

"He can see witchcraft, spells and those things. There is a person who has probably put them to work on you," said the assistant as Angel read my palm.

The witch's curse is blocking my luck, so everything in my life suffers, he said.

The next day I got bad news. My ex-boyfriend is seeing someone.

I exclaimed, "You found him?" but the assistant explained that that's not what they do. They can just "see" he is seeing someone else now.

I tried to look aggrieved.

"We can always bring him back," said the assistant. "To you, for a price."

The assistant explained that there will be three different sessions required and there are different levels of service I can get. The top tier costs \$1,500, in three payments of \$500.

"They'll bring him back and he'll stay with you forever, he'll love you forever. That's why it's the highest price," he said.

For less money, my ex will return but won't be guaranteed to stay as long — \$1,200 for four years, \$900 for two.

If I opt for any, they will throw in a cure for the spell that the witch put on me and give me a charm that will keep me safe in the future. I told them I'd think it over.

They didn't seem to know I was lying nor that I had my phone on with the voice-record app running. Listen to it at metronews.ca.

Reached by phone Thursday, Angel's assistant said they have never had any complaints about what they do and he doesn't feel they are taking advantage of people.

Salem's ordinance

If you can't beat them, license 'em?

Psychics seem to be drawn to Salem, Mass., and its rich history of witchcraft. To keep a handle on things the local government licenses fortune tellers.

The city offers four different kinds of licences, with different rules, said clerk Melissa Pagliaro.

"For a store licence, (it) has to consist of at least 75 per cent ... 'metaphysical' items," she said. "Each store can have up to five readers. They are all subject to an application and a (criminal history) check."

Such items include crystals, anointing oils, amulets, incense, candles, tarot cards, ritual attire, and books related to spiritual study or practice.

IN DEFENCE OF PSYCHICS

CLARE HINES
FOR METRO

For Clare Hines, who has visited psychics for years, it's not about getting back a boyfriend or winning the lottery. It's about keeping in tune with the universe

My great Aunt Nell sometimes said things about which she couldn't — shouldn't — know anything. Details weren't always accurate, but context and implications were.

Aunt Nell would say maybe it was a "gift" or being "sensitive" or having "psychic" powers. She claimed to know no more than anyone else, but that sometimes facts or knowledge revealed themselves to her.

When I was young, Aunt Nell used an ordinary deck of cards for my "readings." It was fun. In my teenage years and later there were no props or formal readings. We just sat and talked. I could tell when she tapped into me. She never spared me the negative — although she once didn't tell a friend he was really ill. And he was. Knowledge could be burdensome.

Aunt Nell said true psychics didn't advertise. One discovered them. Since her passing, I have visited two psychics. They were not easy

to find. It's my experience psychics look like manicurists, administrative assistants and suburban mothers. They use props to aid with concentration. No one ever told me I'd receive a letter soon, take a trip or fall in love. I was told someone always lies to me, bodies of water calm me and I'm my own worst enemy. Indeed.

Sorry, Miss Cleo

Aunt Nell said true psychics didn't advertise. One discovered them.

After visiting a psychic, I'm more in tune with the universe. Implicitly I'm reminded much in life is random, the unpredictable is often more influential than the predictable, that I am not powerless but will never have complete control of anything. However humbling, such wisdom is therapeutic.

My general practitioner once sent me to a psychiatrist to discuss bad dreams and sleeplessness that were affecting my health. Treatment was very helpful. During one session, the psychiatrist asked if I visited psychics: "I suspect they will prove helpful to you." Indeed.

Recent fraud cases

Between 1999 and 2010, five people were charged with pretending to practice witchcraft in Ontario. Toronto police announced two more cases in the last couple of weeks.

- Police said Wednesday they are searching for three female suspects who allegedly conned two women, aged 76 and 53, out of their valuables by offering to "bless" them.

- On Nov. 27, police arrested Gustavo Valencia Gomes of Mississauga, Ont. and charged him with pretending to practise witchcraft and fraud. Maria Roesta, 56, of Brampton, said she went into credit card debt to pay a self-described "healer," who convinced her that her headaches were the result of a curse and extravagant rituals were needed to lift it.

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Canada Post flunks information-request report card – again

Ottawa. Information commissioner finds postal service is still far from achieving transparency



Canada Post vehicles sit outside a sorting depot in the Ville St-Laurent borough of Montreal in this file photo. Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault has found the postal service has made only a bit of improvement over the past two years in how it processes information requests. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The information watchdog says Canada Post has delivered only marginal improvement on its handling of access-to-information requests.

The post office received an F on its latest report card from Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault after being stamped with red-alert status for its poor performance two years ago.

As reported Wednesday, the CBC got an A for its processing of requests in 2011-12, up from an F for its performance two years ago.

The access law allows people who pay \$5 to seek federal files ranging from expense reports and email messages to briefing notes and internal audits.

As an ombudsman for users of the law, Legault has periodically looked at whether key institutions meet their legal obligations of transparency.

In her report card on Canada

Post, Legault said although the Crown corporation has taken some steps toward improving its performance, it is still far from achieving optimal compliance with the law.

In a statement, Canada Post said it was disappointed with the F rating, as it had taken steps to improve performance. It committed to doing even better.

During a news conference Thursday, Legault warned that the access-to-information system is vulnerable, especially since the full impact of federal budget slashing has yet to be felt.

The fear is that federal agencies will trim staff responsible for processing requests, creating a risk of backlogs and delays. THE CANADIAN PRESS

BMO survey

More Canadians have RRSPs than this time last year

An increasing number of Canadians surveyed in a BMO study have invested in a registered retirement savings plan this year. The BMO Financial Group poll found 67 per cent of respondents have an RRSP, compared to 61 per cent at this time last year. Nearly three-quarters of respondents plan to contribute the same amount or more to their RRSP than they did last year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
100.90¢ (+0.06¢)

TSX
12,151.13 (-6.16)

OIL
\$86.26 US (-\$1.62)

GOLD
\$1,701.80 US (+\$8)

Natural gas: \$3.63 (-7¢)
Dow Jones: 13,074.04 (+39.55)

Q4 earnings reports

Strong results don't eliminate worry for banks

Shares in TD Bank, CIBC and National Bank of Canada all fell Thursday as worries about the outlook for consumer loans amid record household debt overshadowed earnings reports that met or exceeded expectations.

Despite solid fourth-quarter financial results, National Bank fell 1.4 per cent to \$76.60, CIBC gave back 0.47 per cent to \$80.14 and TD was off 1.8 per cent, closing at \$81.12.

The performance "reflects what investors see as a challenging environment for the banks," said CIBC World Markets analyst Rob Sedran, who forecast a 2013 growth pullback in the sector to between five per cent and six per cent.

He said the banks are bracing for a decline in consumer loans growth, especially in the cooling housing market, as governments tighten mortgage rules and leveraged consumers become more cautious about borrowing.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bank of Canada. Low interest rates putting stress on world economy, central bank says

The Bank of Canada is warning that its own low-interest policies and those of central banks around the world are adding another layer of risk to the already stressed global financial system and economy.

The central bank says near-record-level interest rates in place since the 2008-09 recession are taking their toll on insurance companies, pension funds and even hopes of increasing the appetite of investors to take risks in search of higher returns.

In Canada, they have been a prime mover to the other major domestic risk — an overheated housing market and high levels of consumer debt as Canadians take advantage of cheap money to buy real estate.

Bank governor Mark Carney has warned about the dangers of low interest rates sporadically in the past, but this time the bank's governing council has thought the concern grave enough to add it to the list of risks facing Canada and the world. THE CANADIAN PRESS

FRACAS ENSUES AFTER F-BOMB DROPPED IN THE HOUSE



THE LIST
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

TGIF, when you can read The Metro List and relive the parade of wonders that marks yet another zany week in this crazy world we live in.

1 We are amused. The next generation of British royals is gestating and poor Kate ends up in the hospital suffering from a right royal bout of morning sickness. After enduring a round-the-clock siege from publicity hounds and pranksters, she emerges looking remarkably well, considering, proving once again that there will always be an England. There might even be twins.

2 Nothing amusing here. The Harper government House leader nearly comes to blows with his NDP counterpart after crossing the floor in a pugnacious manner to deliver a speech composed primarily of the F word. Who elected these clowns? Oh, right.

3 Attack of the killer PM. Why can't we elect somebody cool like Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard who takes time out of her busy schedule to reassure her people that even though the world will end on Dec. 21 (as allegedly predicted by the Mayan calendar), she will continue to stand by them to the bitter end, which will be caused by: "flesh eating zombies, demonic hell beasts or from the total triumph of K-Pop." I think she's kidding, but the Tasmanian devil certainly fits the description of a demonic hell beast.

4 Speaking of the end of the world. The poor little misunderstood pop star Justin Bieber is snubbed by the Grammy nominators again in favour of dumb old guys like Jack White, the Black Keys, and Maroon 5. As if!

5 Riot like an Egyptian. The Muslim Brotherhood, now in power as the Arab Spring turns to winter, passes a constitution that prohibits discrimination against anyone, but removes the phrase: "on the basis of sex, origin, religion and creed." Uh-oh. The Brotherhood's power grab has blown the lid off the uneasy calm on the streets of Cairo, where spring seems a long, long time ago.

6 Lest we forget. This week marks the 23rd anniversary of the cold-blooded murder of 14 women in Montreal by a crazed misogynist. It remains as horrifying as it did then. And yes, every man owns a piece of it.

7 What would YOU have done? A bus driver in Vienna, Austria, finds a sack stuffed with money, (390,000 euros to be precise, worth more than half a million Canadian dollars) and turns it in! It is traced to an elderly lady who left it behind on the bus. For being the world's most painfully honest man, the driver receives a small cash award and, as it's the end of his shift, gets to take the rest of the day off.

Follow The Metro List on
Twitter @TheMetroList



Peter Van Loan, the government's House leader, set off a dust-up when he stormed across the floor of the House of Commons to confront his NDP counterpart, Nathan Cullen, on Wednesday. SCREEN GRAB/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The beauty of making rice



ISABELLE CHAUVEL/SOLENT

Landscape photography

Shining spectacle found in rice fields

At first glance, it looks like a stained-glass window, but a wide gaze reveals something more grand and spectacular.

Reflective pools of water at one of the world's largest rice terraces offer stunning views, especially from 1,800 metres up in the mountains. Isabelle Chauvel took the photos in Yuanyang in China's Yunnan Province. **METRO**

Natural beauty

Man, nature create visual wonder

Chauvel spent from sunrise to sunset taking photos of the handcrafted rice terraces.

"At each time of the day, the colours reflected in the water were different — from bright orange, off-white, earthy brown and verdant green," she told Metro. "It was a true spectacle of what nature has to offer, and the amazing creation mankind has made." **METRO**

Yuanyang terraces

- Formed by the Hani people more than 1,000 years ago, the fields are still used today for irrigation and farming.
- Fields are irrigated with water from the forest. Water evaporates from fields into clouds — their rain is collected and trapped by mountain forests. In turn, spring water returns to fields.



Twitter

@pennkemp: Uh-oh. I've been confusing Andrew Coyne and Andrew Cash, till the penny dropped!). Penny wise and pound foolish... Viva la difference!

@shapiro_reid: Been at western for three years and I just found out that SSC connects to the UCC. #noob #WesternU

@nourtaher8: Racing everyone on campus knowing that we're all probably compet-

ing for a library spot #syudentproblems #westernu

@melissayee: Whoa. Sad to hear about General Dynamics laying off employees right before Christmas. Merry freakin' Xmas. That's just awful. #LdnOnt

@LamontKyle: When ur exam schedule is harder to find than the tests are to do #college life #fashawae



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25%
LOCAL
BOUTIQUES



25%
WHEREVER
THERE'S A
SALE

25%
MALLS



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Even Gerard Butler's trademark rakish smile can't save *Playing For Keeps* from crashing. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD
CROUSE AND
MARK BRESLIN



Playing for weeps

Laughless. The Reel Guys agree — Gerard Butler's latest attempt at a rom com has upset the Movie Godz

Richard: Mark, I tried hard to pin point exactly the thing that bugged me about *Playing for Keeps*. I thought long and hard and have come to realize that we don't have enough space here for me to fully explain why this doesn't work, but let's start with the idea that the women are simply treated as sexed-up plot points and move on from there. What did you think?

Mark: Bad enough that the women are treated as sexed-up plot points; unforgivable that they're all just dropped halfway through the movie. For a while, I thought I was watch-

ing a classic sexist Tony Curtis movie. Troglodyte, perhaps, but at least it was a bit of fun. Then the film lost its guts and became the story of a man who — sob — just wants to be reunited — sob — with his family. Yecch!

RC: Yeah. The first half hour is, maybe not exactly promising, but on par for this kind of movie. Then it takes a turn. He has unresolved feelings for his ex-wife and the movie has unresolved plot points falling from the sky like the tears of the Movie Godz who weep when movies this bad get released. Butler's trademarked eye glint and rakish smile are not enough to save this, and someone please tell Uma Thurman to saddle up and work with Quentin Tarantino again.

MB: Speaking of Uma, how much Botox and Restylane is there in the greater Los An-

geles area? Because she's left very little for the rest of us. And Zeta-Jones' vamping made me feel sorry for Butler — he probably had to endure take after take of her bad Anne Bancroft impression. Only Judy Greer gets to walk away with her dignity intact — but she always does, doesn't she? And the running gag with the East Indian landlord was embarrassing if not borderline racist. C'mon, Richard, give me something to like about this one!

RC: How about this? Katherine Heigl's not in it and it's not longer. At 106 minutes, it tests the limits of endurance. At 107 minutes or more we might have been able to press charges for cruelty. Judy Greer, however, is great and I'm going to have to ask you to be careful what you say about my Uma in future.

MB: I apologize, Richard. I love

Synopsis

Gerard Butler plays George Dwyer, former soccer superstar, now sidelined by injuries. Broke and reduced to selling his own memorabilia to make ends meet, he moves to Virginia to be closer to his ex-wife (Jessica Biel) and their son Lewis (Noah Lomax). When the charming Scot begins coaches his son's soccer team all the soccer moms (Judy Greer, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Uma Thurman) throw themselves at him, but he has eyes for only one woman — his ex-wife.

• Richard: ●●●●●

• Mark: ●●●●●

her too. It's just that I love her even more when her face can move about.

2 SCENE

NEED A RIDE?
Read metro^{drive} every Wednesday.

From horror to comedy, the holidays give us plenty of time for movies

Preview. Metro looks at some of the upcoming flicks hitting theatres near you

UPCOMING COMEDIES

All that holiday family time will leave most of us in need of a few good laughs.

The Guilt Trip

Dec. 19 — This road trip movie starring Seth Rogen and Barbra Streisand aims to plumb the treasure trove of jokes to be made about a mother and son going on a road trip across the country.



The Guilt Trip HANDOUT

This is 40

Dec. 21 — As the "sort of sequel" to 2007's *Knocked Up*, this Judd Apatow film follows committed couple Debbie and Pete (Leslie Mann and Paul Rudd) as they struggle with aging and each other.

Quartet

Jan. 11 (limited) — Dustin Hoffman directs this comedy about a British retirement home for opera singers and the longtime resident who reunites with a lost love. Pretty much, it's *Best Exotic Marigold Quartet*.

A Haunted House

Jan. 11 — Marlon Wayans, Cedric the Entertainer and Nick Swardson finally give Para-

normal Activity and all those exorcist movies the send-up they deserve.

Movie 43

Jan. 25 — Like those monster ensemble rom coms such as *Valentine's Day* and *New Year's Eve*, this comedy packs in a load of stars but promises to be at least a little bit more enjoyable than the aforementioned cheese-fests.

SCI-FI, HORROR, ACTION

Despite being the season for high-concept movies, the horror and action genres have plenty to offer this winter.

Texas Chainsaw 3D

Jan. 4 — It's yet another remake of the classic horror flick, but this time the story follows a young woman who journeys to Texas to gather her inheritance, which happens to be in the home of *Leatherface*.

Mama

Jan. 18 — Annabel and Lucas, a young couple, must raise his two young nieces after being left to fend for themselves by their late parents. They soon discover the girls' dark past, which includes a relentless spirit it called *Mama*.

The Last Exorcism 2: The Beginning of the End

March 1 — If you can get past the film's misleading predecessor, the sequel picks up somewhere down the track as Nell Sweetzer attempts to move on from the past, but is confronted by the sinister force that previously possessed her.

Gangster Squad

Jan. 11 — If Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone aren't enough



This is 40, starring Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann. HANDOUT

to get you interested, this film looks set to be one of the best winter releases. The action flick follows the LAPD's struggle with the East Coast Mafia during the '40s and '50s.

Parker

Jan. 25 — Jason Statham steps back into his signature role as an action hero, but this time he plays a thief who forms an alliance with an unlikely friend (Jennifer Lopez) to get revenge on his gang.



Parker HANDOUT

Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunters

Jan. 25 — The name pretty much sums it up. The flick is a modern take on the classic

fairy tale in which we see Hansel and Gretel on a pursuit for vengeance against the witches who tortured them as children.

Jack Reacher

Dec. 21 — In this adaptation of the Lee Child crime series, Tom Cruise plays an ex-military homicide investigator who steps in to solve a case in which a trained sniper is accused of killing five random innocents.

FILMS LIKELY TO SCORE A GOLDEN STATUETTE

1. Killing Them Softly

Friday — Brad Pitt stars in this dark underworld thriller about a pair of small-time crooks that rob a mobster card game. Soon an enforcer (Pitt) is sent in to make sure that debts are properly paid.

2. Hyde Park on Hudson

Friday (limited) — Bill Murray, Laura Linney and Olivia Williams star in this depiction of

the affair between FDR and his distant cousin, Margaret Stuckley, during the landmark visit of the first reigning British royals on American soil.

3. Amour

Dec. 19 (limited) — The winner of the 2012 Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival has yet to leave anything but a stirring impression on those who have seen it. Austrian filmmaker Michael Haneke's depiction of an elderly couple facing their mortality guarantees a beautifully heart-rending experience.

4. Zero Dark Thirty

Dec. 19 (limited) — After her Oscar win for 2008's *The Hurt Locker*, Kathryn Bigelow presents another military drama in the Middle East, this time following the hunt and execution of Osama Bin Laden.

5. The Impossible

Dec. 21 (limited) — Naomi Watts and Ewan McGregor star in the true story of one family's struggle to survive the tsunami that struck the coast of Thailand in 2004.

6. Not Fade Away

Dec. 21 (limited) — The mastermind behind *The Sopranos*, David Chase, writes and directs this nostalgic drama about a fledgling rock band trying to make it big in 1960s New Jersey. And yes, James Gandolfini (formerly known as Tony Soprano) does make an appearance.

7. On the Road

Jan. 18 (limited) — This long-awaited adaptation of Jack Kerouac's beloved beatnik novel stars Garrett Hedlund, Kirsten Dunst and of course a topless-at-one-point Kristen Stewart as a bunch of roustabout rebels in the late '50s, trying to discover what it means to be free.

8. Django Unchained

Dec. 25 — Vigilante justice is the cornerstone of any Quentin Tarantino film, and his 2012 offering promises to deliver the obligatory amount of gratuitous bloodshed. Jamie Foxx plays a freed slave who is assisted in revenge by his mentor, played by Christoph Waltz.



Django Unchained HANDOUT

9. Les Misérables

Dec. 25 — Some Oscar wins are practically in the hands of director Tom Hooper already for his adaptation of the Broadway musical, originally penned as a novel by Victor Hugo. By recording the live singing performances of stars Russell Crowe, Hugh Jackman, Anne Hathaway and others, the film stands to break new ground for musical adaptations that eschew the cheese factor.

10. Promised Land

Jan. 4 — Matt Damon, Frances McDormand, John Krasinski and Rosemarie DeWitt star in this film about a natural gas company salesman who experiences a conflict of interest when arriving in a small town that is the next target for prospecting.

11. The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

Dec. 14 — The first installment of Peter Jackson's latest Tolkien trilogy is sure to pick up at least a few technical awards for its daring method of shooting film at twice the speed of regular film (48 frames per second, as opposed to the traditional 24).

METRO

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Readings by: Jamie Caskey, Maia Bent,
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Armitage's journey to becoming a dwarf

The Hobbit. Actor credits Tolkien with pushing his imagination and leading him to acting

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

In *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, British actor Richard Armitage plays Thorin Oakenshield, exiled dwarf king. He's a newcomer to the Peter Jackson vision of Middle Earth — which began with the three *Lord of the Rings* films, and continues with a new *Hobbit* trilogy — but no stranger to the world of author J.R.R. Tolkien.

"I am one of those people who have loved the book," he says. "I remember being read *The Hobbit* by a teacher in primary school who did amazing voices, God bless her. I picked up the book myself and started reading it, which was kind of rare because normally I would have to be forced to read."

He missed the chance to audition for the first set of films, but when *The Hobbit* came around he jumped at the chance.

"I had no idea how I would fit into that story because the idea of playing a dwarf just wasn't on my radar. I'm six foot three and a half, so why on earth would I play a dwarf?"

It wasn't the first time he was excited to bring the fantasy of Middle Earth to life.

"I was in a stage production of *The Hobbit* when I was 13," he says, "which I leapt at. It's weird how you have that reaction when someone says they're doing a stage production, at 13 to go, 'I've read that book. I love it. Let me be in it.' I had the same feeling when they were making this movie."

He says thoughts of that long ago play are "filled with strange memories."

"I remember wearing a knitted smock, which had been sprayed silver to look like chain mail but it was made of wool. I was an elf. I was pretty tall for 13 years old. Gollum was made of paper and they didn't have enough money for a dragon, so it was a red light, a puff of smoke and a man off stage with a microphone. I remember running around in circles eating grapes because we were doing a scene in the forest where the Elves are tempting the dwarves to come to their feast."

He draws a straight line between his early love of Tolkien and his current profession.

"My imagination was totally stimulated by Tolkien's world and I think once you've had your imagination stimulated in that way, every book you ever read you dramatize in your head. You hear character's voices and visualize that world."



Richard Armitage plays Thorin Oakenshield, exiled dwarf king, in *The Hobbit*. HANDOUT

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Don't miss Last Chance

With Human Rights Day on December 10, the National Film Board of Canada is offering a free screening on their website of *Last Chance*, a documentary by Paul Émile d'Entremont featuring five asylum-seekers from Jamaica, Colombia, Lebanon, Egypt and Nicaragua who have fled homophobic violence. Check out NFB.ca, or metronews.ca/scene to see the trailer. CHARLES GAGNON



Media partner



HAHAHA.COM/CONCERTS

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., DEC. 7 TO THURS., DEC. 13. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

London

Hyland Cinema 240 Wharnclyffe Road South, 519-913-0313

Argo (14A) Fri 1 Sat 7 Sun 2:45 Mon 6:45 Tue 3:15-9 Wed-Thu 5
Chasing Ice (PG) Fri 8:45 Sat 5 Sun 6:45 Mon 3:20 Tue 5:30 Wed 7:15 Thu 3:15
Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has to Travel (PG) Fri 3:15-7 Sat 3:20 Sun 1-5 Mon 5-9 Tue 1:30 Wed 3:20-9 Thu 1:30-7:15
The Sessions (14A) Fri 5 Sat 1:30-9:10 Sun 8:30 Mon 1:30 Tue 7:10 Wed 1:30 Thu 9

Rainbow Cinemas London 355 Wellington St., 519-434-3073

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (PG) Thu 10
Life of Pi (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-3:40-7:10-9:50
Lincoln (PG) Fri-Wed 12:45-3:45-6:50-9:45 Thu 12:45-3:45-6:50
Playing for Keeps (PG) Fri-Wed 12:50-3:10-6:50-9:10 Thu 12:50-3:10-9:10
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri-Thu 1:15-3:35-7:15-9:25
Skyfall (PG) Fri-Thu 12:55-3:55-6:55-9:45
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri-Tue 1:10-3:45-7:05-9:35 Wed 3:45-7:05-9:35 Thu 1:10-3:45-7:05
Wreck-It Ralph (PG) Fri-Thu 1-3:30-7-9:30

Western Film Room 340, UCC Building,

Argo (14A) Fri-Thu 7
Pitch Perfect (PG) Fri-Thu 9:25
The Room (STC) Fri 12

Wellington 8 Cinemas 983 Wellington Rd. S, 519-685-2529

Flight (18A) Fri 6:30-9:35 Sat-Sun 12:20-3:25-6:30-9:35 Mon-Wed 5:10-8:20 Thu 5:10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (PG) Thu 10
Killing Them Softly (18A) Fri 7:15-9:45 Sat-Sun 1-3:50-7:15-9:45 Mon-Thu 5:45-8:30
Life of Pi (PG) Sat-Sun 12:40
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri 7-9:55 Sat-Sun 3:40-7-9:55 Mon-Thu 5:30-8:25
Playing for Keeps (PG) Fri 7:10-9:50 Sat-Sun 12:50-4-7:10-9:50 Mon-Thu

5:20-7:50
Red Dawn (PG) Fri 7:20-9:40 Sat-Sun 1:20-4:10-7:20-9:40 Mon-Thu 5:25-8:35
Rise of the Guardians (G) Sat-Sun 1:10
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Fri 6:50-9:20 Sat-Sun 3:45-6:50-9:20 Mon-Thu 5:40-8:10
Skyfall (PG) Fri 6:45-10 Sat-Sun 12:15-3:30-6:45-10 Mon-Thu 5-8:15
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri 6:40-9:30 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:15-6:40-9:30 Mon-Thu 5:15-8

Cineplex Odeon Westmount & VIP Cinemas 755 Wonderland Road South, 519-474-2796

Anna Karenina (14A) Fri 3:30-6:40-9:45 Sat 12:45-6:45-9:50 Sun 3:50-6:45-9:50 Mon 6:40-9:40 Tue 3:30-6:40-9:45 Wed 6:40-9:40 Thu 9:40
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (PG) Thu 10 Thu 10-10:25
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri 4-7:10-10:10 Sat-Sun 1-4-7:10-10:10 Mon 6:50-9:50 Tue 4-7:10-10:10 Wed-Thu 6:50-9:50 Fri 4:30-7:30-10:25 Sat 4:05-7:30-10:30 Sun 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:15 Mon 7:30-10:15 Tue 4:30-7:30-10:25 Wed 7:30-10:15 Thu 7:20
The Metropolitan Opera: Un Ballo in Maschera Live (STC) Sat 12:55 Sat 12:55 Miracle on 34th Street (G) Sun 12:45 Wed 7
Playing for Keeps (PG) Fri 4:10-6:50-9:30 Sat-Sun 12-2:30-5:05-7:45-10:25 Mon 6:45-9:20 Tue 4:10-6:50-9:30 Wed 1:20-6:45-9:20 Thu 6:45-9:20 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Rise of the Guardians (G) Sat-Sun 11:50
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Fri 4:55-7:30-10:05 Sat-Sun 2:20-4:55-7:30-10:05 Mon 7:05-9:35 Tue 4:55-7:30-10:05 Wed 1:25-7:05-9:35 Thu 7:05-9:35
Royal Opera House: The Nutcracker (STC) Thu 7:30
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri 4:20-7:25-10:20 Sat 3:45-7:20-10:20 Sun 12:55-4:20-7:20-10:20 Mon 7:20-10:10 Tue 4:20-7:20-10:20 Wed 1:25-6:40-9:25 Thu 6:50-10:20 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Skyfall (PG) Fri 3:35-7-10:15 Sat 12:45-4-7-10:15 Sun 12:20-3:35-7-10:15 Mon 6:55-10:05 Tue 3:35-7-10:15 Wed 1:15-6:55-10:05 Thu 6:55-10:05 Fri 3:20-6:30-9:40 Sat 12:30-3:40-6:30-9:40 Sun 12:15-3:20-6:30-9:40 Mon 6:30-9:40 Tue 3:20-6:30-9:40 Wed-Thu 6:30-9:40
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri 4:45-7:45-10:35 Sat-Sun 11:45-2:25-5:10-8-10:40 Mon 7:25-10:15

Tue 4:45-7:45-10:35 Wed-Thu 7:25-10:15 Fri 4-7-10:05 Sat 1:20-7-10:05 Sun 1-4-7-10 Mon 7-10 Tue 4-7-10:05 Wed 7-10 Thu 7
Wreck-It Ralph (PG) Sat-Sun 12
Wreck-It Ralph 3D (PG) Fri 5-7:40-10:30 Sat-Sun 2:30-5:05-7:40-10:30 Mon 7:10-9:45 Tue 5-7:40-10:30 Wed 9:45 Thu 6:40

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A Christmas Story (STC) Sat 11
Flight (18A) Fri 1:25-4:30-7:35-10:40 Sat 1:25-7:35-10:40 Sun 12:35-4:05-7:10-10:20 Mon-Thu 12:35-4:05-7:15-10:20
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey — An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) Thu 10
Killing Them Softly (18A) Fri-Sat 12:45-3:15-5:45-8:15-10:45 Sun 12:30-3-5:30-8-10:30 Mon-Thu 1:20-4:20-7-9:45
Life of Pi 3D (PG) Fri 1-4-7:05-10:05 Sat 1:10-4-7:05-10:05 Sun 1-4-7:05-10:05 Mon-Thu 1-3:55-7-10:05
Lincoln (PG) Fri-Sat 12:30-3:50-7:10-10:25 Sun 12:45-3:50-7-10:10 Mon-Thu 12:45-3:50-6:55-10:10
The Metropolitan Opera: Un Ballo in Maschera Live (STC) Sat 12:55
Playing for Keeps (PG) Fri 1:30-4:20-7:20-10:35 Sat 12:05-2:40-5:15-7:50-10:35 Sun 1:10-3:45-6:55-9:50 Mon-Thu 1:10-3:45-6:45-9:50 Wed 3:45-6:45-9:50 Thu 1:10-3:45-6:45-9:50 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Red Dawn (PG) Fri 12:55-3:25-5:55-8:25-10:55 Sat 4:40-5:55-8:25-10:55 Sun-Thu 12:30-2:55-5:25-7:35-10:05
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri 12:40 Sat 11:05-12:10 Sun 12:40 Mon-Thu 12:50
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Fri 3-5:25-7:40-10:15 Sat 2:30-5-7:40-10:15 Sun 3-5:25-7:40-10:15 Mon-Wed 3-5-10-7:25-9:40 Thu 3:35-6:20-8:25
Skyfall (PG) Fri-Sat 12:25-3:40-7-10:30 Sun-Thu 12:25-3:30-6-50-10
Skyfall: The IMAX Experience (PG) Fri-Sat 12:50-4:10-7:30-11 Sun-Wed 12:40-4-7:20-10:30 Thu 12:40-3:40-6:40
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (PG) Fri 1:40-2:20-4:30-5:10-7:15-7:55-10:10-10:50 Sat 11:30-12:20-2:20-3:05-5:10-5:35-7:55-8:05-10:30-10:50 Sun 1:25-2:05-4:15-4:55-7:05-7:30-9:55-10:25 Mon-Tue 1:25-4:15-7:05-9:55 Wed 4:15-7:05-9:55 Thu 1:25-4:15-7:05-9:55 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Wreck-It Ralph (PG) Fri-Thu 12:20
Wreck-It Ralph 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 2:45-5:15-7:45-10:20 Mon-Thu 2:45-5:15-7:50-10:15

Bruno Mars to play until his fingers bleed

New album. The out-of-the-box musician talks about what went into making his latest effort, *Unorthodox Jukebox*

NINA ETTRUP
Metro World News

Bruno Mars was born and raised in sunny Hawaii. He's sold millions of records. And he has those chocolatey brown eyes. His shirt is mostly unbuttoned and he speaks slowly while stirring milk into a huge cup of coffee and settling into a huge, brown leather couch.

Relaxed, cool and confident — that's how he appears while talking about his new album, *Unorthodox Jukebox*. And he probably is, at least today. But that's not how he feels all the time. The 27-year-old singer had a very hard time getting started on the album, the successor to his hugely successful debut *Doo-Wops & Hooligans* from 2010. "I went through writer's block — two months of being uninspired. It was just weeks and weeks of going back into the studio and trying to write something that means something. It's not easy. It gets scary, and I was afraid I'd never be able to write anything ever again."

"Suddenly, for some reason, it started flowing again. That part of my brain turned back on," he explains.

Bruno Mars thinks that it



Bruno Mars is anything but your standard musician. JAMES MOONEY

was the many months that he spent on tour after releasing *Doo-Wops & Hooligans* that made it difficult to get back into song-writing mode.

"Maybe it was because I was coming off tour and I was trying to get my mind to work like that again. You have such a repetitive life on tour, travelling and singing the same songs over and over again. When you take all of that away, the transition ... You've been playing the same chords and now you're trying to teach yourself new chords," he says.

Even though he's named after professional wrestler Bruno Sammartino, music, not sports, was No.1 in Bruno Mars' childhood home in Hawaii. Both his parents are singers, and he's been performing in front of a real audience — not just mom and dad in the backyard — since he was three or four years old.

He's had the same idols

since then too. He's still a fan of Michael Jackson, Prince, Freddie Mercury and Sting — and yes, his new hit song *Locked Out of Heaven* may sound somewhat like The Police, he admits, grinning.

"There's an '80s kind of a feel to it. It wasn't planned, but my love for these chord progressions and the synth drum machines that were popularized in the 80s came out on this album much more than on the first one. I feel like ... in the '80s there were singers, real strong singers," he says.

"Today, it's more like 'the era of computer-programmed.' There's a beauty in that too — I'm not a snob that's gonna say, 'This is not real music.'"

It's just not his taste. Bruno Mars likes the guys who played their instruments, till — as Bryan Adams said — their fingers bled. And that's how he's made a career for himself too.

A little more from Bruno

One more quote from Bruno Mars.

- On the title of the album *Unorthodox Jukebox*. "I was always told that my music was too unorthodox, too all over the place. That really chapped my ass, because I'm all over the place. The way I write music and all the music

that I enjoy is what makes me unorthodox. To the suits that's a bad thing, because they have to think about marketing and what radio station will play this song and who will listen to it. Is it a young audience? An urban audience? A rock audience? I never understood all these questions."

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OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

'Tis the season in the city for these two starlets



THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Sarah Jessica Parker and Naomi Watts not only juggle A-list acting careers as well as their families, but they also somehow find the time to take advantage of New York City's many cultural opportunities (annoying, I know).

"We have incredible museums that are affordable and free, we have tons of wonderful ballet companies. I try to do all these things with my children. Simply walking up and down the streets of New York — there's art everywhere, there's things to talk about," said Parker Thursday



night at the New 42 Gala, which honoured the Australia Council for the Arts as well as supported the New Victory Education Program. Naomi Watts — who was there with her children, Sasha, 5, and Samuel, 4, and partner Liev Schreiber — agrees. "We've done a few shows with the kids. It's a treat," she said.

But lest you think Parker and Watts are so perfect they only fill their childrens' heads with intellectual goodness, rest assured both women have fallen prey to holiday craziness.

"We're pretty conventional," says Parker about her holidays with her family, which includes husband, actor Matthew Broderick, son



James, 10, and twin daughters Marion and Tabitha, 3. "We like to be together, we like to eat, we play Yankee Trader."

Meanwhile, it seems like the Liev/Watts household has fallen victim to the holiday terrorist that is Elf on the Shelf. (For those of you lucky enough not to know what this is, the Elf on the Shelf is a doll who allegedly spies on your kids at Christmas time and has to be moved night after night by the parents. It's great for about a hot minute.)

"I think they're getting into the whole Santa Claus thing," Watts said about her little family. "They've got the Elf on the Shelf and every night he moves." WITH REPORTING BY

OLIVIA MORROW



Kate Middleton

Sovereign stork to arrive in the summer

It's going to be a summer baby for Kate Middleton, according to Life & Style. "She's due in July, which is a month full of significance for William," a source says. "His mother, Diana, was born on July 1, and his parents got married on July 29." As for who the godparents will be for the new prince or princess? Signs are pointing to Prince

Harry and Pippa Middleton, according to ABC News. "Kate is very close to her sister, Pippa, and William is infinitely, in the same way, close to Prince Harry. So they are the obvious choice," royal contributor Victoria Arbiter Brown says. "They were the best man and the chief bridesmaid at their wedding, they're well-trusted, they're family."

A second sleepover for Swift and Styles



Taylor Swift ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

The fledging romance between Taylor Swift and One Direction star Harry Styles appears to be heating up pretty quickly, if their latest rendezvous are any indication. Styles was spotted trying to sneak into the New York City hotel where Swift is staying, an overnight bag over his shoulder, according to Hollyscoop. That's the second night in a row the young music stars have spent together at the hotel this week.

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Sharp 90-inch LED TV — \$9,999.99, below, Apple TV — \$109, right.

Television Wonderland

Samsung Blu-ray Player BD-E6500 — \$219

Not only can this Blu-ray device play your favourite high-definition movies in 2-D and 3-D, it can turn any TV into a smart TV with built-in apps such as Netflix, YouTube and Facebook. If you already own a Samsung smart-phone you can use it to control the action. The built-in USB port also allows playback of videos, photos and music from your USB devices.



Apple TV — \$109

Access all of your iTunes content directly on your television. This tiny media player ensures all of your movies, TV shows, and music are readily available, plus get access to Netflix, YouTube and Vimeo without logging onto your computer. One of my favourite features has to be AirPlay, which allows you to stream content from your iPad, MacBook, or iMac right to your television with a simple click. Great for presentations or simply playing games and apps on the big screen.

Logitech Harmony 650 Remote — \$79.99

At one time you had to pay a fortune to get an amazing universal remote. The Harmony 650 proves that's no longer the case. Complete with colour display, this advanced remote can control up to five devices at a fraction of the price of other high-end remotes. While it does require an Internet connected PC or Mac to set up, once it's up and running it simplifies even the most complex home theatre setup so everyone in the family can use it.

Samsung Blu-ray Player BD-E6500 — \$219, left, Panasonic Viera TCL42U5 — \$499, top left, Logitech Harmony 650 Remote — \$79.99, top right.

Options for your viewing pleasure



MIKE
YAWNEY
For Metro

Wouldn't it be nice to wake up to a brand new television Christmas morning? Whether you are looking for a new TV or simply want to add to your home theatre, there are plenty of options for you or the videophile on your shopping list.

Panasonic Viera TCL42U5 — \$499

Not everyone needs all the bells and whistles of some of the more expensive televisions on the market. Sometimes you just want to watch TV. This 42-inch 1080p LCD TV gives a great picture for a

fraction of the price of most other sets. You still get a variety of inputs (including three HDMI) plus you will benefit from Eco mode, which will save you money on your energy bills.



LG Cinema 3D LM9600 — \$2,299

If your heart is set on a 3-D TV, look no further than this LED TV from LG. It has the ability to convert any 2-D content

Sharp 90-inch LED TV — \$9,999.99

Good luck bringing this one down the chimney Santa! Sharp's 90-inch LED TV is

into breathtaking 3-D on the fly. Everything can be controlled through simple gestures using the Magic Remote, or simply tell your TV what you want it to do through voice control. You will find tons of inputs on the back, plus it's Wi-Fi enabled.

the largest in Canada. Experience movies the way they were meant to be seen — on the big screen. The larger screen allows for bigger speakers, giving you a theatre-like experience right in your home. Gamers will enjoy the Vyper Drive feature that reduces lag times while playing games. You can also connect wirelessly to the web or enjoy apps such as Netflix. This beautiful television comes with a hefty price tag, so don't even think about asking for it if there is even the slightest chance you are on the naughty list.



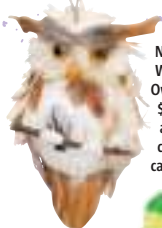
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Metal Owl Ornament, \$12.50, available at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.

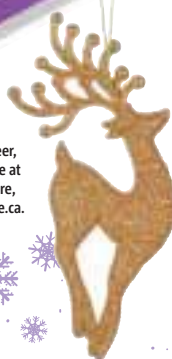


Natural Woodland Owl Ornament, \$12.50, available at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.



Winter Owl Ornament, \$12.50, available at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.

Prancing Deer, \$1, available at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.



Bark Reindeer Ornament, \$4.50, available at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.

Claydough Robots, \$2, available at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.



Plaid Moose Ornament, \$2, available at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.



Yoda Wireform, \$74.99, available at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.



Starbucks Cup Ornament, \$5.45, available at Starbucks, starbucks.ca.



Glitter Bird Ornament, \$9.50, available at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.



Snowflake Ornament In Sterling Silver, \$195, available at Tiffany & Co., tiffany.ca.

Santa Yoda Tree Topper, \$49.99, available at RetroFestive, RetroFestive.ca.



JULMYS Hanging Decoration, 3-pack, \$6.99, available at Ikea, ikea.com/ca.



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A beauty bounty



**JANINE
FALCON**
For Metro

From beauty empowerment to fragranced skin, from shimmering nails to luscious hair, these gift ideas have her (and you) covered.

More than a makeup book, **Bobbi Brown Pretty Powerful** (Chronicle Books, 2012) is a confidence-builder from a pro who empowers with must-try tips and tricks. \$34.95 hardcover, chapters. indigo.ca.

Give her nail polish collection a brand new sheen with **YSL La Laque Couture Top Coat in Première Neige**, an iridescent top coat that

sparkles over any colour. \$27, Holt Renfrew.

Any scent from the Byredo Parfums collection is a unique and special gift for fragrance lovers; **Byredo Black Saffron**, an Oriental Spicy eau de parfum is the newest. \$235, Holt Renfrew.

Luscious **LoveFresh Lemon Verbena Body Butter** pampers skin with aloe, chamomile and calendula extracts, and is made sans parabens or petrolatum. \$24, lovefresh.com.

Glamorous yet understated like its creator Aerin Lauder, the **Aerin Holiday Style Palette** offers foolproof shadows and subtle highlight powder. \$78, estelauder.ca.

Feminine and fragrant, **Valentino Valentina Body Scrub** is a creamy exfoliant in a lovely frosted jar she'll keep for years. \$78, thebay.com.

The award-winning complexion-saver of the season, this natural moisture booster relieves eczema. **Consonant HydrExtreme Serum**, \$72, consonantbody.com.

She'll swoon over **MAC's Sinfully Chic Face Kit**, a charming neutral makeup + brush set. Trust. \$85, maccosmetics.com.

Soft, shiny, swingy hair is hers with silicone-free **Shu Uemura Cleansing Oil Shampoo**, which gently purifies all hair types, including fine, limp, and oily. \$55.

Below, left to right: Consonant HydrExtreme Serum, Aerin Holiday Style Palette. Bottom: MAC's Sinfully Chic Face Kit.



Clockwise, starting above: Valentino Valentina Body Scrub, YSL La Laque Couture Top Coat in Première Neige, Byredo Black Saffron, Shu Uemura Cleansing Oil Shampoo, LoveFresh Lemon Verbena Body Butter.



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Grooming gifts for him



JANINE FALCON
For Metro

From wake-up to spruce-up, these manly gift ideas will help him put his best self forward before his first coffee of the day.

Perk up his morning routine with the ultra-fresh **L'Occitane Verdon Adventure** set, which includes shower gel, soap, deodorant and eau de toilette. \$82, loccitane.ca.

He'll appreciate the weightless **Biotherm Homme Force Supreme** anti-aging formulas that promise smoother, firmer, more comfortable skin. Lotion, \$45 and

Serum, \$70; biotherm.ca.

If he's into natural stuff, he'll dig non-oily **Weleda After Shave Balm**, which cools and soothes with organic jojoba seed oil, aloe and myrrh. \$26.99, well.ca.

Set him up for next November with the waterproof **Philips Shaver**, which trims, styles and shaves with easy precision. \$99.99, personaledge.com.

He doesn't have to be a sexy vampire (or an actor who plays one) to wear **Calvin Klein Encounter**, a warm, woody scent. \$67, thebay.com.

Ideal for the man who likes simple yet sophisticated skincare, **Shiseido's Men's Essentials Gift**

Set includes a handsome toiletry case. \$70, thebay.com.

Help him love his hair more with **Kerastase Anti-Oiliness Daily Treatment Shampoo** and **Leave-In Treatment**. \$36 each, kerastase.com.

For the multi-tasking man, the **Jack Black Core Collection** includes cleanser+toner, shave-oil cream+skin conditioner, and moisturizer+SPF. \$52, ebeauty.ca.

Stock his gym bag with zesty essentials, such as **Crabtree & Evelyn's West Indian Lime Travel Set**. \$26, Crabtree & Evelyn boutiques.

From bottom left to bottom right: L'Occitane Verdon Adventure set, Biotherm Homme Force Supreme, Philips Shaver, Weleda After Shave Balm, Crabtree & Evelyn's West Indian Lime Travel Set.



Above: Jack Black Core Collection. Right: Kerastase Anti-Oiliness Daily Treatment Shampoo. Below: Shiseido's Men's Essentials Gift Set.



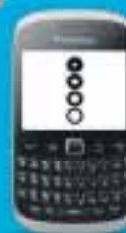
Calvin Klein Encounter, above.



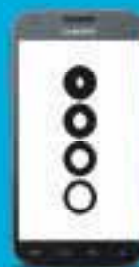
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Masonville Place
Milton Mall
New Sudbury Centre
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Teen dream beauty and body care



JANINE
FALCON
For Metro

From savvy style advice to smart skincare to totally adorbs makeup, great gift ideas for the teens in your life.

An energizing citrus kick in the morning shower via a **LUSH Cool Christmas** duo is just the thing for sleepyhead teens. \$16.95, lush.ca

Whether your teen is obsessed with fashion or just developing his or her own style, **Learn to Speak Fashion: A Guide to Creating, Showcasing and Promoting Your Style** (Owl Kids, 2012) offers smart insider insight, advice and encouragement you'll love too. \$16.95 paperback, chapters.indigo.ca.

Put the kybosh on clogged teenage pores with a **Clarisonic Mia** for deep-

cleaning sessions every other day. \$139, sephora.ca.

No girl can resist mini beauty treats; the **Soap & Glory Small Wonders Gift Set** totes fits the mini bill (and your wallet). \$20, Shoppers Drug Mart.

If you love makeup, you'll want to snag a **Stila Snow Angel Color Palette** — 18 shadows, 12 blushes and a mascara (not shown) — for yourself, too. \$51, sephora.ca.

Get your teen on a good-skin regimen with a **Dermologica Clean Start Starter Kit**, which handles pesky zits, too. \$45.50, cleanstart.dermologica.com.ca

From the fashion queen of whimsy, this **Anna Sui Holiday Collection** includes blush, shadow, lip gloss and a sweet lacy



pouch. \$50, Sears.ca and Murale.ca.

The Body Shop For Men Maca Root Scrub & Shave Set sets your young fellow up with face wash, moisturizer — and eye cream Dad can swipe. \$35, thebodyshop.ca.

Nourishing essentials for feet and hands, such as the **Burt's Bees Best of Burt's Bees Set**, are easy stocking stuffers. \$24.99, burts-bees.ca.

Top: Dermalogica Clean Start Starter Kit. Above left: Burt's Bees Best of Burt's Bees Set. Above: LUSH Cool Christmas. Bottom left: Anna Sui Holiday Collection. Below: The Body Shop For Men Maca Root Scrub & Shave Set.



Left: Stila makeup palettes.

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3
LIFE

Liquid Assets

Restoreport's
regal nature

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
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If there's a liquid silver lining to winter being around the corner, it's that port season has officially arrived.

This time of year provides chilly nights and the opportunity for roaring fires, both perfect companions to a glass of the king of Portuguese wine.

For some of you, port carries more baggage than the Kardashians on a three-day vacation. The term has been used by countries the world over (including Canada) on the labels of generic, booze-infused wines that totally take the regal name of port in vain.

Most have stopped, and true port is finding a new audience as a luxurious meal ender or cigar companion (if you're so inclined).

Choosing the port that's right for you can be a struggle. Most are expensive and not all are appropriate for drinking right away.

A Late Bottled Vintage style, like Taylor's 2005 LBV (\$16.45 to \$24.99), is a mid-priced blend of wines all produced in the same year. Smooth, with deep, dark berry fruit, an LBV is drinkable right out of the bottle, will keep for several weeks once opened and makes a great introduction to the world of port. **PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.**

Step up fancy factor with Prime Veal Chop

Prime Veal Chop with Pesto and Feta Cheese. It may be hard to believe, but this delicious recipe takes just three ingredients to make



ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

I created this recipe for The Pickle Barrel chain of restaurants in Toronto.

The veal chop is beautifully lean and tender.

The combination of pesto and feta complements it beautifully and gives the dish a Mediterranean twist.

This goes well with grilled vegetables and mashed potatoes.

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking oil.

2. Spray a non-stick skillet with cooking oil and place over medium-high heat. Cook the veal on both sides just until seared and browned, approximately 2 minutes per side. Place on the prepared baking sheet.

Ingredients

4 portions
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 14 minutes

- four 6- to 8-oz prime veal chops with bone in (also known as the French cut)
- 2 tbsp pesto
- 2 tbsp crumbled feta cheese



This recipe serves four. BRIAN MACDONALD, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

3. Spread both sides of the veal with pesto sauce and sprinkle with the feta, patting the cheese down firmly.

4. Bake for approximately 10 minutes, until the internal temperature registers about 135 F for medium-rare, or to desired doneness.

Let rest 5 minutes before serving.

ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN



This recipe serves 16. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cranberries get an upgrade

The holiday season is a favourite time for cranberries. In this recipe, they get a makeover by being turned into a chutney with port.

1. In a large, heavy pot, combine the cranberries, orange zest and juice, balsamic vinegar, port and sugar. Bring to low boil, then reduce heat to simmer. Add the apricots, cherries and salt.

2. Making sure the cranberries don't burn, continue cooking over a low-medium heat, stirring occasionally, for

Ingredients

- Two 12-oz bags fresh cranberries, washed and picked through
- Zest and Juice of 1 large orange (about 1/2 cup of juice)
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup port wine
- 1 cup sugar

- 1 cup dried Turkish apricots, cut into strips
- 1 cup dried cherries
- Pinch salt
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1 tsp cinnamon

about 10 minutes, or until the cranberries start to pop.

3. Add the nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon, then stir well

to combine. Continue cooking on low until thick, about another 5 to 7 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings, if necessary. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Have a few gaps in your schedule you're looking to fill?
Whether you're hoping to dance, drink or just relax, check out these hot upcoming events.



MIX OF SIX
Julian Uzielli
london@metronews.ca



College crafts

You can avoid the Christmas shopping crowd at the mall next week with the annual Fanshawe College craft show. On Dec. 13, 24 vendors specializing in various crafts — including photography, sea shell art, handmade jewelry and Christmas decor — will set up along the F-Building hallway. All proceeds from booth rentals will go toward the Karen Monahan International Entrance Award, an annual scholarship awarded to a qualifying international student. The show runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Photo courtesy of Teresa Arnsby-Weaver.



Hallelujah, Leonard!

Canadian music and poetry icon Leonard Cohen will be playing at Budweiser Gardens (99 Dundas St.) on Dec. 11. The 78-year-old legend, who has been performing since the 1960s, is currently touring the world in support of his latest album, *Old Ideas* — the most successful album of his career, debuting at No. 1 in 11 countries and receiving widespread critical acclaim. Tickets start at \$49.50 and are available at budweisergardens.com. Photo courtesy of Savannah Sewell.



A Christmas Carol

Orchestra London and the Unity Project have teamed up again for their fifth annual Christmas Carol event on Dec. 12. The show will feature a lively dramatic reading of the Charles Dickens classic, accompanied by the orchestra, the London Singers and the H.B. Beal Singers. Admission is on a pay-what-you-can basis, with all proceeds going to the Unity Project for homelessness relief in London. The show is at Centennial Hall (550 Wellington St.) and doors open at 6 p.m. Photo courtesy of Sonia Wolf.



The Flatliners

Toronto ska-punk band The Flatliners are celebrating their 10th anniversary with their 10 Years at Sea tour, stopping at Call The Office at 216 York St. On Dec. 13. Since making a splash with their 2005 debut album *Destroy to Create*, the band has put out a slew of releases on big-name punk label Fat Wreck Chords. Doors open at 8 p.m., openers are The Polar Bear Club and The Menzingers. Tickets are \$16 in advance at ticketscene.ca or \$18 at the door. All ages. Photo courtesy of The Flatliners.



The Demon Barber of Richmond Street

Sweeney Todd is visiting the other London. The award-winning musical has three shows left in its run at the Grand Theatre's McManus Studio Theatre at 471 Richmond St. The music in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* is widely considered to be among the best work by celebrated Broadway composer Stephen Sondheim. There are evening shows at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and a matinee at 2 p.m. tomorrow. Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$20 for students, and are available at tickets.grandtheatre.com. Photo by Ross Davidson.



Kiwi Krazy

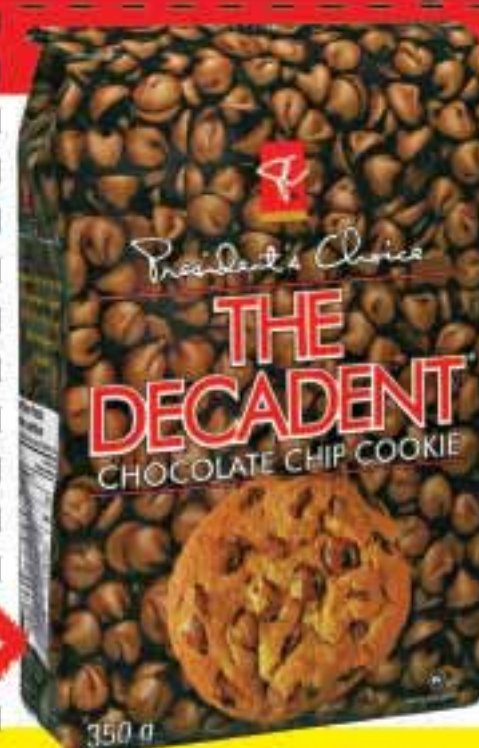
Just because winter is coming on, doesn't mean you can't get your fro-yo fix. Tomorrow, Ontario-based frozen yogurt bar Kiwi Krazy is opening its second London location, in South London at 397 Wellington Rd. S, Unit B. Frozen yogurt offers ice cream lovers all of the satisfaction with none of the guilt — unless, of course, you go for some of the sweeter toppings available. To celebrate the opening, there will be free yogurt all day Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

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PLU 71388



Sidney Crosby listens as NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr speaks to reporters on Thursday in New York. MARY ALTAFFER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fehr-ing the worst: NHL talks stall again

Day 82. No negotiations planned after NHLPA's proposal rejected by league

The NHL labour talks have hit another roadblock — and this one appears to be massive.

After two optimistic days that suggested a deal could be imminent, negotiations between the league and the NHL Players' Association broke off dramatically Thursday.

The NHLPA presented a new offer on Thursday afternoon, a proposal that union head Donald Fehr called "a clear outline" to end the dispute.

Fehr said he believed the

Quoted

"It looks like this is not going to be resolved in the immediate future."

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr

two sides are "clearly very close if not on top of one another in connection with most of the major issues."

The league flatly rejected the offer, saying the two sides aren't close despite what Fehr says.

"I don't know why he did that," an angry Gary Bettman told a news conference.

The NHL commissioner said any new offers the league made this week are now off the table.

"The take or give or bottom

line on all this is: It appears that the union is suggesting because we made substantial movements in certain areas that we're close to a deal," said Bettman. "But those moves were contingent on the union specifically agreeing on other things, which while the union may have moved towards, didn't agree to."

During talks this week, the league said it was willing to increase the amount of deferred transition money paid to the

players to \$300 million US — which sat directly between what had most recently been tabled by the NHL (\$211 million) and NHLPA (\$393 million).

Another issue that surfaced was the league's desire to see a 10-year term on the collective bargaining agreement. The union's offer Thursday was for eight years with an option for opting out after Year 6.

"I'm disappointed beyond belief that we are where we are tonight," said Bettman.

Fehr's comments took an equally negative tone.

"What can we tell the hockey fans of Canada? You can tell them that it looks like this is not going to be resolved in the immediate future," Fehr said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Star free agents left waiting after winter meetings

As teams headed home from the baseball winter meetings on Thursday in Nashville, the biggest free agents were still on the market.

The availability of slugger Josh Hamilton and pitcher Zack Greinke held up decisions on other signings and possible trades involving Rangers star Michael Young and the Mets' Cy Young Award winner R.A. Dickey.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MMA

'Rowdy' Rousey to top marquee of February UFC card

"Rowdy" Ronda Rousey will make her UFC debut Feb. 23 in the main event of UFC 157 against Liz Carmouche.

The UFC will showcase women's MMA for the first time at the Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif.

UFC president Dana White presented Rousey with her UFC bantamweight championship belt after Thursday's news conference featuring fighters on Saturday's televised card in Seattle. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Ronda Rousey shows off her UFC bantamweight championship belt on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Steelers hope 'Big Ben' bulletproof in return



Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger watches last Sunday's game against the Ravens from the sidelines. Roethlisberger will return to the starting lineup this Sunday with some high-tech extra protection. ROBB CARR/GETTY IMAGES FILE

The Pittsburgh Steelers aren't taking any chances with their franchise quarterback's sprained right shoulder and dislocated rib.

Though the Steelers confirmed Ben Roethlisberger will return to the starting lineup on Sunday against San Diego after missing three weeks due to injury, Roethlisberger will take the field with a little extra protection.

Roethlisberger will play with a custom-fit rib/chest compression shirt and a layer of Kevlar-lined composite in his shoulder pads to help absorb hits to his clavicle and shoulder joint regions.

The padding has grown

Quoted

"I think he brings a dimension to the team that nobody else can bring."

Steelers wide receiver Mike Wallace on Ben Roethlisberger

popular across the NFL.

The composite — about a half-inch thick — in Roethlisberger's shoulder pads is similar to the gear Unequal Technologies puts in its chest protectors for baseball catchers. Roethlisberger said last week his shoulder pads had been "juiced up" by trainers.

Whatever he's wearing, the

Steelers (7-5) are eager to have him back on the field. Roethlisberger took "90 per cent" of the first-team snaps on Thursday without any major issues.

"He looks like himself for the most part," offensive co-ordinator Todd Haley said. "Now I don't know what he's feeling when he's doing some of those things. But it looks like he's moving around pretty good."

Roethlisberger said he felt "good" but declined to expand. Haley doesn't expect there to be any limitations to the playbook, though he joked he might not call as many designed run plays for his quarterback, who never met a play he didn't like to extend. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Horoscopes

Aries

March 21 - April 20

You can be successful on a material level but you will also have to take on some heavy responsibilities. Are you prepared to do that? It's important that you decide one way or the other before making your next move.

Taurus

April 21 - May 21

You may doubt that you are up to the task that has been set for you, but you must not let those doubts take hold. Think of life as a wonderful adventure. It's how you play the game.

Gemini

May 22 - June 21

Group activities are under the spotlight today and you may meet someone who has a profound effect on the way you look at the world. If you feel it is your destiny to do something special, you will soon get the chance.

Cancer

June 22 - July 23

If you want to make a name for yourself, now is the time to begin. Set new goals and start long-term projects. Just make sure you know what the consequences will be. This isn't for fun, this is serious.

Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

Unexpected delays may frustrate you today, and maybe into the weekend, but there is nothing you can do about them. So, lighten up. The scenery may pass slowly but that gives you more time to enjoy it.

Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

Your money situation may be going through an up and down phase, but the planets indicate that real wealth is within your grasp. You'll change the way you think about what you own and earn over the next 24 hours.

Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

Someone you usually get along with so well is hard to get through to today. It's as if there is an invisible barrier between you. Don't worry, it's nothing serious. They just need to be left alone with their thoughts for a while.

Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Don't worry if a plan or project you have been working on for months, maybe even years, is still not complete. It's a long-term project, after all. Having said that, see how far you can move it forward today.

Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

At some point today, you will realize that what seems like harmless enjoyment to you may not be so harmless to other people. It's important to remember that you don't live in a vacuum. Actions always have consequences.

Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

Something will happen over the next two or three days that reminds you of your responsibilities. Most important of all is your duty to loved ones. How can you help ease a relative's pain?

Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Others may wonder why you are so difficult to get through to but even an Aquarius needs to spend some time alone. Come the weekend you will be your old self again, open and happy and eager to share.

Pisces

Feb. 20 - March 20

The limitations and restrictions of the past few days will start to lift and by Monday, at the latest, you will be free to pursue your own interests. Hopefully, those limitations will have taught you the importance of timing. **SALLY BROMPTON**

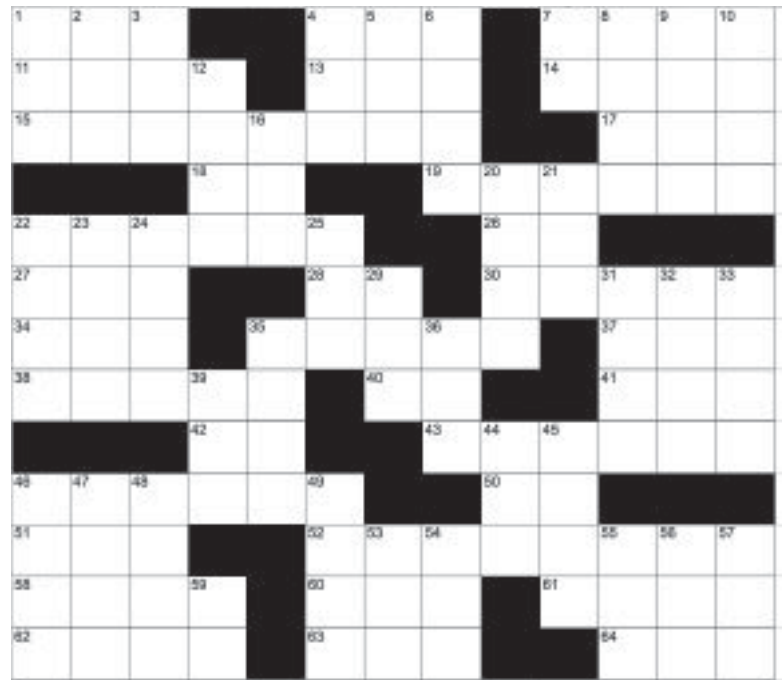
Crossword

Across

- carte (2 wds)
- Family Ties actor: Michael J. —
- A softened oath
- Painted metalware
- Mine yield
- Withered
- Type of stew
- "The Crying Game" actor Stephen —
- Commercial message
- Seem
- Where ends meet
- Common Latin abbr.
- Latin 101 verb
- Contented sigh
- Dims
- Funnyman Conway
- Rise and —
- Fury
- Cubic metre
- Courtroom figure (abbr.)
- For shame!
- Apiece (abbr.)
- Extremely bright
- Designer McCartney
- Musical note
- Ramsey
- Sloppy
- Crew needs
- The Royal Canadian — Farce
- Boxcar rider
- Factual
- On the authority of
- Coal container

Down

- Banking convenience
- Role for Ed Asner
- My Children
- Haze
- Openings (anat.)
- Warrior princess of TV



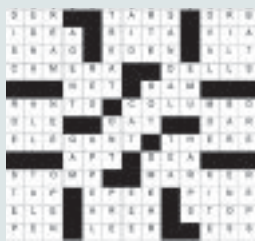
BY BETTY MARTIN

- Plural suffix
- "An Officer and a Gentleman" actor
- Locale
- Letter starter
- Zest
- Chemical suffix
- Tube
- Small green veggie
- Broadway musical
- Overlook

- Italian capital
- Bleachers cheer
- Concealed
- Boost
- Lake near Niagara Falls
- Flower starter
- Fasten tightly
- Henpeck
- Family mem.
- Brat
- Child's card game: Go —

- Photographed
- Shed one of these
- Beige shade
- On the double
- Fib
- Like some verbs (abbr.)
- Peg
- Sash
- Put on
- Opposite of NW

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers
metronews.ca/
answers.



Sudoku

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's Sudoku

6	7	9	2	1	5	8	4	3
1	8	5	9	4	3	2	6	7
4	2	3	7	6	8	5	1	9
9	3	2	4	7	1	6	5	8
5	4	6	8	3	9	7	2	1
7	1	8	6	5	2	9	3	4
2	5	1	3	8	7	4	9	6
3	6	7	5	9	4	1	8	2
8	9	4	1	2	6	3	7	5

8		4		5			2	6
	1	9						
			3					9
5		2	1					
7			6		5			2
				2	8			7
1				4				
					6	3		
	2	5		8		4		1

Today

6/-1°

Drizzle

40%

Saturday

4/-1°

Rain or snow showers

40%

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